

May 20 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2003

world as blessed and as beautiful as the one our parents left us.

Thank you for your interest in this important subject. May God bless your work, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Healthy Forests Restoration Legislation

May 20, 2003

Today's action by the House on the "Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003" is an important step toward implementing the kind of active forest management that is good for both the environment and our economy. It will save lives and the national treasure of our great forests, with their wildlife, trees, waters, habitat, and other natural resources.

I urge the Senate to act quickly on this much-needed legislation. As this year's fire season progresses, we must equip Federal land managers with the tools they need to protect lives and communities, restore forest health, and safeguard habitat and watersheds.

Radio Remarks to the People of Cuba on Cuban Independence Day

May 20, 2003

Today, Cubans around the world celebrate May 20th, Cuban Independence Day. On behalf of the people of the United States, I send greetings to the Cuban community. My hope is for the Cuban people to soon enjoy the same freedoms and rights that we do. Dictatorships have no place in the Americas. May God bless the Cuban people who are struggling for freedom. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded in Spanish at 9:50 a.m. on May 16 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for later broadcast on Radio Marti. The Spanish language transcript and an English translation were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 20. This text follows the English translation.

Commencement Address at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut

May 21, 2003

Thank you very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. Admiral Collins and Admi-

ral Olsen, Secretary Ridge, Lieutenant Governor Rell, Mr. President—I'm glad you're

here; thank you for coming, sir—Congressman Simmons, the fine professors of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, distinguished guests, proud family members, and the graduates, thank you for your welcome, and thank you for the honor of speaking to the newest officers of the United States Coast Guard.

You know, I was born in this State, just down the road. [Laughter] I've still got relatives living here. [Laughter] And it looks like some of them were up late last night painting Pride Rock. [Laughter]

This is a proud day for the Class of 2003. I know you've worked hard to get here. You've persevered through the rigors of Swab Summer. You've faced difficult trials in the classroom, aboard *Eagle*. And now, with silver dollars in your pockets, you're ready to become officers in our Nation's oldest continuous seagoing service. You have shown each day that you "revere honor" and that you "honor duty." You have made your families, your professors, and your country proud. On behalf of the American people, thank you for choosing a life of service, and congratulations on a great achievement.

I bring with me a small graduation present. Pursuant to the longstanding tradition, I hereby grant amnesty to all cadets on restriction for minor conduct offenses. [Laughter] I leave it up to Admiral Olsen to determine the definition of "minor." [Laughter]

Coast Guard Academy life is demanding, and it should be because you are entrusted with solemn responsibilities in peace and in war. America counts on the Coast Guard to enforce maritime law, to secure our waterways and ports, to rescue those in distress, and to intercept illegal drugs. In this new century, we will count on you even more. The men and women of this class are the first ever to graduate into the Department of Homeland Security, which is charged with protecting the American people against terrorist attacks. You are bringing a long tradition of duty to this new

and urgent tasks. Terrorists who seek to harm our country now face your "Shield of Freedom." Every citizen can be grateful that the Coast Guard stands watch for America.

The Coast Guard is also playing a vital role in America's strategy to confront terror before it comes to our shores. In the Iraqi theater, Coast Guard cutters and patrol boats and buoy tenders and over a thousand of your finest active duty and reserve members protected key ports and oil platforms, detained Iraqi prisoners of war, and helped speed the delivery of relief supplies to the Iraqi people. Many have returned safely to port, and many remain on duty in the Persian Gulf. All have helped to liberate a great people, and all have brought a great credit to the uniform of the United States Coast Guard.

In Iraq, America's military and our allies carried out every mission and exceeded every expectation. Heavy units of armor and infantry moved with speed and agility that kept the enemy in a state of constant surprise and deadly confusion. Airstrikes and cruise missiles destroyed the power centers and meeting places of the regime, while targets were carefully examined to protect the innocent from harm. Our forces confronted an enemy that rejected every rule of warfare and morality, but our men and women in uniform showed their decency and kept their honor. In a month of battle, American armed services set an example of skill and daring that will stand for all time.

America will not relent in the war against global terror. We will hunt the terrorists in every dark corner of the Earth, and we're making good progress. Nearly one-half of Al Qaida senior operatives have been captured or killed. We will deny the terrorists the sanctuary and bases they need to plan and strike, as we have done in the battle of Afghanistan. We will not permit terror networks or terror states to threaten or blackmail the world with weapons of mass destruction, as we have shown

in the battle of Iraq. Our country has been attacked by treachery in our own cities, and that treachery continues in places like Riyadh and Casablanca. We have seen the ruthless intentions of our enemies. And they are seeing our intentions: We will press on until this danger to our country and to the world is ended.

Yet, the national interest of America involves more than eliminating aggressive threats to our safety. We also stand for the values that defeat violence and the hope that overcomes hatred. We find our greatest security in the advance of human freedom. Free societies look to the possibilities of the future, instead of feeding old resentments and bitterness. Free countries build wealth and prosperity for their people in an atmosphere of stability and order, instead of seeking weapons of mass murder and attacking their neighbors. Because America loves peace, America will always work and sacrifice for the expansion of freedom.

The advance of freedom is more than an interest we pursue. It is a calling we follow. Our country was created in the name and cause of freedom. And if the self-evident truths of our founding are true for us, they are true for all. As a people dedicated to civil rights, we are driven to defend the human rights of others. We are the nation that liberated continents and concentration camps. We are the nation of the Marshall plan, the Berlin airlift, and the Peace Corps. We are the nation that ended the oppression of Afghan women, and we are the nation that closed the torture chambers of Iraq.

America's national ambition is the spread of free markets, free trade, and free societies. These goals are not achieved at the expense of other nations; they are achieved for the benefit of all nations. America seeks to expand not the borders of our country but the realm of liberty.

Our vision is opposed by terrorists and tyrants who attack a world they can never inspire. This vision is also threatened by

the faceless enemies of human dignity, plague, starvation, and hopeless poverty. And America is at war with these enemies as well.

The advance of freedom and hope is challenged by the spread of AIDS. Today, on the continent of Africa, nearly 30 million people are afflicted with HIV/AIDS, including 3 million children under the age of 15. The African Continent has lost 7 million agricultural workers. In some countries, almost a third of the teachers are HIV-positive. A 15-year-old boy living in Botswana has an 80-percent chance of dying of AIDS. It is a desperate struggle for any person or any nation to build a better future in the shadow of death.

Yet, this shadow can be lifted. AIDS can be prevented, and AIDS can be treated. Lives can be saved, and others extended by many years. In my State of the Union Address in January, I put forward an Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief directing \$15 billion over the next 5 years to fight AIDS abroad. And we will especially focus our efforts on 14 African and Caribbean nations where HIV/AIDS is heavily concentrated.

I'm pleased that both Houses of Congress have now passed a bill authorizing these funds. I look forward to signing the bill next week. The Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is the largest single upfront commitment in history for an international public health initiative involving a specific disease.

With this dramatic expansion of America's efforts, we will prevent 7 million new HIV infections, treat at least 2 million people with life-extending drugs, and provide humane care for 10 million HIV-infected individuals and AIDS orphans.

When I travel to Europe next week, I will challenge our allies to make a similar commitment which will save even more lives. I will remind them that the clock is ticking, that every single day 8,000 more people will die from AIDS in Africa; there will be 14,000 more infections. I will urge

our European partners and Japan and Canada to join a great mission of rescue and to match their good intentions with real resources.

The advance of freedom and hope in the world is also challenged by an ancient enemy, famine. Our world produces more than enough food to feed its 6 billion people. Yet tens of millions are at risk of starvation, and millions more lack water fit for drinking. This crisis also is concentrated in Africa. We have the ability to confront this suffering, and we accept the duty as old as the Scriptures to comfort the afflicted and to feed the hungry.

America is already the largest provider in the world of food relief, giving more than \$1.4 billion in global emergency food aid and one-half of all contributions to the World Food Program. And we are determined to do more. I've committed to a nearly \$1 billion initiative to provide clean drinking water to 50 million people in the developing world. I've also asked Congress to provide \$200 million for a new famine fund, which will give us the flexibility to act quickly when the first signs of famine appear. I call on other nations to follow our lead by establishing their own emergency funds. By saving time in responding to crisis, we will save lives.

We can also greatly reduce the long-term problem of hunger in Africa by applying the latest developments of science. I have proposed an Initiative to End Hunger in Africa. By widening the use of new high-yield biocrops and unleashing the power of markets, we can dramatically increase agricultural productivity and feed more people across the continent.

Yet, our partners in Europe are impeding this effort. They have blocked all new biocrops because of unfounded, unscientific fears. This has caused many African nations to avoid investing in biotechnologies, for fear that their products will be shut out of European markets. European governments should join, not hinder, the great cause of ending hunger in Africa.

We must also give farmers in Africa, Latin America, and Asia and elsewhere a fair chance to compete in world markets. When wealthy nations subsidize their agricultural exports, it prevents poor countries from developing their own agricultural sectors. So I propose that all developed nations, including our partners in Europe, immediately eliminate subsidies on agricultural exports to developing countries so that they can produce more food to export and more food to feed their own people.

The advance of freedom is also undermined by persistent poverty and despair. Half the human population lives on less than \$2 a day. Billions of men and women can scarcely imagine the benefits of modern life because they have never experienced them.

For decades, many governments around the world have made sincere and generous efforts to support global development. Far too often, these funds have only enriched corrupt rulers and made little or no difference in the lives of the poor. It's time for governments of developed nations to stop asking the simplistic question: How much money are we transferring from nations that are rich? The only question that matters is: How much good are we doing to help the people that are poor? The only standard worth setting and meeting is the standard of results.

The lesson of our time is clear: When nations embrace free markets, the rule of law, and open trade, they prosper, and millions of lives are lifted out of poverty and despair. So I have proposed the creation of a new Millennium Challenge Account, an entirely new approach to development aid. This money will go to developing nations whose government are committed to three broad standards: They must rule justly; they must invest in the health and education of their people; and they must have policies that encourage economic freedom.

To fund this account, I have proposed a 50-percent increase in America's core development assistance over the next 3 years.

Under this proposal, our annual development assistance eventually will be \$5 billion greater than it is today. I urge the Congress to give its full support to the Millennium Challenge Account. And when I'm in Europe, I will call on America's partners to join us in moving beyond the broken development policies of the past and encourage the freedom and reform that lead to prosperity.

These goals—advancing against disease, hunger, and poverty—will bring greater security to our country. They are also the moral purpose of American influence. They set an agenda for our Government, and they give idealistic citizens a great cause to serve. President Woodrow Wilson said, "America has a spiritual energy in her which no other nation can contribute to the liberation of mankind." In this new century, we must apply that energy to the good of people everywhere.

For more than four decades, the volunteers of the Peace Corps have carried the good will of America into many parts of the world. Interest in this program is greater than ever before. I'm determined to double the size of the Peace Corps over the next 5 years. Today I would like to announce a new USA Freedom Corps initiative called Volunteers for Prosperity, which will give America's highly skilled professionals new opportunities to serve abroad. The program will enlist American doctors and nurses and teachers and engineers and economists and computer specialists and others to work on specific development initiatives, including those that I have discussed today. These volunteers will serve in the countries of their choice

for however long their project takes. Like generations before us, this generation of citizens will show the world the energy and idealism of the United States of America.

I see that idealism in the faces of our soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines. I see that idealism in the faces of this Academy class. The men and women of the Coast Guard are "always ready" to defend the security of this Nation. You are "always ready" to rescue those in trouble. These two commitments define your mission, and they define America's role in history. We understand that strength is necessary to confound the designs of evil men. And we know that the compassion and generosity of this land can aid the suffering and inspire the world. We will use the great power of America to serve the great ideals of America. And by these efforts we will build a lasting, democratic peace for ourselves and for all humanity.

Congratulations. May God bless the Class of 2003. May God continue to bless the United States of America. *Semper paratus.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. at Nelson W. Nitchman Field. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Thomas H. Collins, USCG, commandant, U.S. Coast Guard; Rear Adm. R.C. Olsen, Jr., USCG, superintendent, United States Coast Guard Academy; Lt. Gov. M. Jodi Rell of Connecticut; and President Thomas E. Remengesau, Jr., of Palau, who presented a commission to the first Coast Guard Academy graduate from Palau. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.